I CLAIM:

1. A locking toggle clasp assembly for releasably coupling opposing terminal portions of a jewelry item, comprising:

a toggle bar connected to a first terminal portion of the jewelry item; and

a toggle clasp connected to a second terminal portion of the jewelry item, the toggle clasp having an opening, wherein the toggle clasp is selectively movable between an open position in which the toggle bar may pass through the opening and a locked position in which the toggle bar is prevented from passing through the opening.

2. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the opening in the toggle clasp is a first size when the toggle clasp is in the open position and is a second size when the toggle clasp is in the locked position, the second size being smaller than the first size to prevent the toggle bar from passing through the opening.

3. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the toggle clasp comprises a toggle loop defining the opening and a swivel pivotally connected to the toggle loop, the swivel being selectively movable between a first position where the swivel impinges into the opening to prevent the toggle bar from passing through the opening and a second position where the swivel does not impinge into the opening to permit the toggle bar to pass through the opening, and wherein the toggle clasp is in the locked position when the swivel is in the first position and the open position when the swivel is in the second position.

4. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, wherein the toggle bar has a major axis and a minor axis, the toggle bar being larger than the opening in a

first dimension along the major axis and smaller than the opening in a second dimension along the minor axis when the toggle clasp is in the open position.

5. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 4, wherein the toggle bar is adapted to be inserted through the opening along the minor axis when the toggle clasp is in the open position.

6. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 5, wherein the major axis of the toggle bar is in a plane generally perpendicular to a major axis of the jewelry item.

7. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, wherein the toggle loop and the swivel cooperatively define a first open area when the swivel is in the first position and a second open area when the swivel is in the second position, the first open area being smaller than the second open area.

8. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, wherein the toggle clasp is releasably maintained in the locked position due to frictional engagement between the swivel and the toggle loop when the swivel is in the first position.

9. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, further comprising means for connecting the toggle bar to the first terminal portion of the jewelry item.

10. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 3, further comprising means for connecting the toggle clasp to the second terminal portion of the jewelry item.

11. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the jewelry item is a chain.

12. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the jewelry item is a bracelet.

13. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 12, wherein the bracelet comprises a plurality of links.

14. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 1, wherein the jewelry item is a necklace.

15. The locking toggle clasp assembly according to claim 14, wherein the necklace comprises a plurality of links.

16. A toggle clasp assembly for releasably coupling opposing ends of an item of jewelry, comprising:

a male toggle member having a major dimension along a first axis and a minor dimension along a second axis, the male toggle member adapted to be coupled to a first end of the jewelry item such that the first axis is generally perpendicular to a major axis of the jewelry item;

a female toggle member defining an opening and adapted to be coupled to an opposing end of the jewelry item; and

a protruding member pivotally connected to the female toggle member, the protruding member being selectively movable between an open position where the male toggle

member can pass through the opening and a closed position where the protruding member impinges into the opening to prevent the male toggle member from passing through the opening.

17. The toggle clasp assembly according to claim 16, wherein the major dimension of the male toggle member is larger than the opening.

18. The toggle clasp assembly according to claim 17, wherein the male toggle member can pass through the opening along the second axis corresponding to the minor dimension when the protruding member is in the open position.

19. The toggle clasp assembly according to claim 17, wherein the protruding member is releasably maintained in the closed position due to frictional engagement between the protruding member and the female toggle member when the swivel is in the closed position.

20. A method for releasably coupling opposed ends of an item of jewelry, comprising the steps of:

providing a male toggle member on a first end of the item of jewelry, the male member having a major dimension and a minor dimension;

providing a female toggle member on an opposing end of the item of jewelry, the female toggle member defining an opening that is smaller than the major dimension;

pivoting a swivel about the female toggle member from a closed position where the swivel impinges into the opening to prevent the male member from passing through the opening to an open position where the swivel does not impinge into the opening;

inserting the male toggle member through the opening along an axis corresponding to the minor dimension when the swivel is in the open position;

pivoting the swivel to the closed position to impinge the swivel into the opening and releasably prevent the male toggle member from passing through the opening.

21. The method according to claim 20, further comprising the step of releasably locking the swivel in the closed position by frictional engagement between the swivel and the female toggle member.